

Vacation's Over!

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CLIPPER CONTRIBUTOR

Just back from the warmth and sunshine of more southerly climes are Duxbury's ospreys. Mature moms and dads returning to their nests will now turn to the serious business of propagating of their species. Meanwhile, those still in the dating game, who fledged from nests two years ago, will be getting together, finding nesting sites and assembling fifteen pounds or so of sticks into homes for the future. These newlyweds will build their nests, but, during their first year of wedded bliss and second year of life, will lay no eggs. Egg laying only begins in their third year of life. Instead they spend the spring and summer honing instinctual food gathering skills begun in the south during the winter. There they scooped fish from warmer waters and now have to translate those warm water fish hunting instincts to the colder waters of New England and Duxbury Bay. There are currently three home sites for newly mated ospreys to choose from thanks to Duxbury's Conservation Department. One is on the marsh at the headwaters of the Bluefish River and another is at the end of Hornbeam Road beside the mouth of a small creek flowing into the bay. A third platform juts from the remains of a stargazing telescope observatory on Little Wood Island. The Bluefish River marsh platform went up in 2014 and is sited so as to be visible through a bird spotting scope donated by Battelle Memorial Institute from the library window of the new high school. There also are plans afoot to install a bird camera on this platform but, to date, since no osprey couple has claimed it, those plans are on hold.

One additional new platform went up just weeks ago but this one replaced an existing platform teetering precariously and in need of immediate replacement. The new platform had been assembled in the town-owned Delano Barn at the end of Cordwood Path and should have gone up earlier but the barn had been snowed in so completely the DPW had to plow out access to the doors in order to get the awkward platform out. Joe Grady and a team of volunteers then loaded it onto a boat and transported it to Scat Island north of the Powder Point Bridge for installation.

As the boat pulled up to the old rotting and dangerously leaning platform, the returning osprey pair had just arrived and were sitting atop it. They flew off and circled making grouchy sounds as Joe and his crew bored a hole into the marsh, erected the new platform and braced it to withstand future winds, ice and snow. They then demolished and removed the old one. Within a day the osprey pair had returned, examined their new digs, found them acceptable and begun the nesting process.

Don't you just love adaptable birds?



The conservation crew takes a break after hauling the osprey platform to the site. Andy Whalen, Kyle Hallifey, Greg Morse, Conservation Administrator Joe Grady, Bruce Duffy and Steve Donovan



Crews put up the osprey platform near the end of Hornbeam Road.



Conservation Conversation